



Coalition for a Better Wallingford is a grassroots organization committed to building Healthy, Caring, and Responsible Citizens. Working as a community to promote positive attitudes, improve the health and welfare of our families, and build a strong Wallingford.

Comments for Public Hearing

March 4, 2014

Re: HB 5372, HB5374

Chairperson, committee members, and all concerned attendees,

My name is Ken Welch, President of the **Coalition for a Better Wallingford**, a grassroots organization, formed on the heels of an outbreak of substance abuse deaths (53 over a three and a half year period) in our town of Wallingford.

Today, this problem has made headlines in many communities throughout the country, our region and the state of Connecticut. The identification of support services in the face of dying members of the community has been an overwhelming task for our organization. Complications to our efforts start with the stigma of a perceived "self-inflicted action of the addict", and proceed through the school halls of unequipped health workers, 'unknowing' town officials, a very quiet clergy, underfunded local interventionists, understaffed social services, and end up in the lap of peer parent support and bereavement groups. I do not have to mention the legalistic positions taken by other municipal services we should rely on to be appropriately responsive to these needs. Something is very wrong.

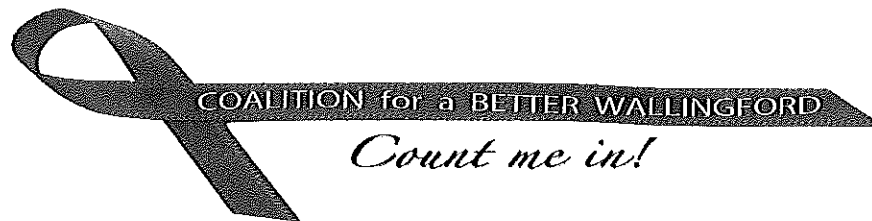
It is hard to know that adding the language in these bills will affect a positive change for those people and families that need the help, but we agree with the language and support all efforts to bring a more comprehensive and better funded approach to our community.

Specifically, there are a number of actions that will allow communities like Wallingford to get ahead of this problem, begin the healing process, and prevent the ongoing destruction of our citizens:

1. **Establish a state level review board specifically aimed at this epidemic. We now have enough information to warrant a dedicated effort aimed at coordinating and implementing protocols for prevention, intervention and treatment of prescription drugs.**
2. **Cut off the source of unnecessary drugs.**
 - a. Make participation in the PMP program mandatory for all parties (Prescribers and pharmacists) with stiff penalties for non-compliance
 - b. Establish a protocol for all prescribers that forces them to see the scope and depth of the effect of the misuse of this family of opioids in our world.

CBW c/o The Law Offices, 171 Center St., Wallingford, CT 06492

Email - cbwlfld@gmail.com Website - www.cbwlfld.org Facebook - Coalition for a Better Wallingford



Coalition for a Better Wallingford is a grassroots organization committed to building Healthy, Caring, and Responsible Citizens. Working as a community to promote positive attitudes, improve the health and welfare of our families, and build a strong Wallingford.

- c. Make mandatory the use of effective screening tools, narcotics management contracts, and education for all pain med relationships, especially the initial encounter with any use.
- d. Promote enhanced coordination between jurisdictional law enforcement agencies to deter doctor shopping.
- 3. **Make NARCAN more available**
 - a. Make training and treatment mandatory for all "First Responders" - Police, EMS, Paramedics
 - b. Make available for all families with an active addict
- 4. **Support local 'Interventionists'**
 - a. Provide criteria for establishment and support of local community programs like "The Dry Dock" and funding for these operations.
 - b. Establish and coordinate a shared data base/web site with access for local Coalitions dedicated to community-wide awareness and support
 - c. Establish a funding source for local "backbone" agencies like Youth and Social Services in support of local efforts
- 5. **Establish mandatory drug education programs throughout the state, with participation from educators, students, and community**
 - a. Promote the reality of this 'disease' to eliminate the stigma that prevents positive outcomes
 - b. Establish a 'Youth Sport Mentoring' program that includes a substance abuse education model. (Our youth sport coaches are still considered the most influential people by our youth.)
 - c. Establish a Transitions Awareness Program for all graduating high school seniors that prepares them with resources and coping skills
- 6. **Increase funding for local drug law enforcement**
- 7. **Make mandatory 'Mental Health Equality'**

This is a healthy start at the appropriate approach to eliminating the substance abuse problems we face. It may be a daunting list to some, but to the honest and committed this is only a beginning. It is the beginning of building a solid foundation for the future of our communities.

Thank you.